/For additional information on the seasonal migrations of the Sarakatsani with their flocks, see category 233./

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# I

# HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

## 1. VLACHS

In continental Greece north of Corinth the observant traveller is soon aware of communities of Greek-speaking transhumant shepherds known as Sarakatsani (Σαρακατσάνοι, or Σαρακατσαναῖοι). In the plains it is unnecessary even to leave the main roads to see small groups of circular, domed, huts of wood and thatch, or flocks of sheep and goats guarded by shepherds dressed in rough black suits and immense goat-hair capes woven from the fleeces of their own animals. From May until the first days of November these semi-nomad shepherds graze their considerable flocks on the higher slopes of the mountains, generally 3,000–6,000 feet above sea level; during the remainder of the year they live in the coastal plains. Simple facts of climate and relief, snow on the high ground in winter, in the summer burning heat in the plains, encourage this transhumance in a geographical area physically dominated by the ranges of the Pindus massif and the southern extremity of the Rhodope mountains. Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Thrace are the provinces in which they are most numerous but communities are found further south in continental Greece and some groups are established in the north of the Peloponnese and Euboea. In the whole of Greece their number, perhaps, approaches eighty thousand,[1] a population which was possibly absolutely greater a hundred years ago, but was certainly relatively more considerable as a fraction of the total inhabitants of the area.

The Greek villagers generally refer to the Sarakatsani simply as Vlachs (βλάχοι), that is shepherds who, in step with the rhythm of the seasons, lead their animals alternately down to the plains and up to the mountains. The occupational reference of the word, Vlach,[2] is an old one, already in use during the Byzantine Period.

[1] Mme Chatzimichalis arrives at a total of 81,473. Ἀγγελική Χατζημιχάλη, Σαρακατσάνοι, Athens, 1957, vol. i, Part A, p. νβ'.

[2] See e.g. Anna Comnena, Ed. Bonn., i, p. 395. One of a number of references quoted by Mme Chatzimichalis, op. cit., vol. i, Part A, p. κ'.

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precipices and tend to 'lean over' towards the west. Thus, in general, the western slopes of the Pindus, as in parts of Zagori, present an extremely difficult terrain over which movement is not easy. Many of the valleys are narrow and steep-sided and the two principal rivers Aóös and Vikos lie in deep and formidable ravines. The canyon of Vikos is a remarkable natural feature 4,000 ft. in depth.

The most important sheep grazing area of the Zagori is the Gamila feature whose highest peak is 8,140 ft. above sea level. On the higher slopes of this mountain the important sheep villages of Papingo, Tsepelevo, Kapesovo, Vradeto, and Skamneli, to mention only the villages on its western flank, graze 33,000 sheep and goats. The rocks of this mountain, as of the other high peaks in Zagori, are of limestone formation; but the smaller features and the valleys are mostly rocks of sandstone. At the contact lines between the permeable limestone and the sandstone there are often springs and streams fed by the melting snows and the abundant rain, for this is the wettest area of Greece with, in places, an annual rainfall of 50 inches. The limestone slopes produce a sparse but fine grass which the shepherds claim is the best grazing for the milking or pregnant ewe. On some of the lower slopes in the eastern Zagori, especially those which face eastwards, there are considerable forests of silver fir and Corsican pine and a grass which is more luxuriant. The shepherds, however, prefer the thin grasses of the open limestone slopes, and comparative figures of milk yields appear to support this preference.

The more important grazing villages of the Zagori are situated 3,000–4,000 ft. above sea level and the pastures are generally found above the village to an altitude sometimes as high as 6,000 ft. Snow falls on the higher pastures as early as the first days in November and the villages themselves are often deep in snow from Christmas until the middle of March. These are the physical and climatic conditions which lead to the transhumant economy—abundant and, generally, well watered summer grasslands with maximum day temperatures which seldom exceed 80°F. in the village, or 70°F. on the higher pastures, but snow and bitter cold which force the shepherds to take their animals to the plains in winter. In the higher villages of Zagori a few sheep and goats are kept under cover during the

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consequences. It instructed that the names of semi-nomad shepherds should be added to the citizenship roll of either the summer or the winter village of their grazing grounds. A majority of the Sarakatsani with grazing in the western and central Zagori elected to write their names on the roll of their summer village.[14] The purpose of the central government was to control an untidy and potentially disorderly element in a state based on the village community of settled peasantry. However, the proud villagers of Zagori with their inherited pretensions were deeply dismayed at this act of arbitrary legislation. While their own youth left for the town and city, rights of citizenship in the villages were by law extended to uncivilized and uneducated shepherds. Traditionally the Sarakatsani had built their summer huts on the grazing land they leased. But now possessing the rights of village citizenship, some bought houses in the depopulated village and others began to build their groups of huts on its outskirts. Daily contact between the two communities in these circumstances intensified their traditional antipathy. Yet at the same time the newly acquired local voting rights necessarily integrated the Sarakatsani into the village patronage system, and the villagers' attitude of open contempt forced them slowly but certainly to a growing conformity with village habits at least in their more outward and material aspects.

There were also important changes in the forms of co-operation between families within the community. Previously the grazing of areas carrying two or three thousand sheep had been sold each year by Zagori villages to the leading families of Sarakatsani. For these alone had the wealth and experience to carry through the negotiation. Through the lease of this grazing, the head of such a family, the tselingas (τσέλιγγας), also controlled a number of other families who contracted to work with him for the summer or winter period. The nucleus of the group was co-operating families (σμίχτες) often related by kinship or marriage; but a number of unrelated men with few or no animals of their own were also associated as wage shepherds.

[14] However, a village could resist the application if it was able to show that grazing land was not available. Since the pressure on grazing land was greater in the plains, Sarakatsani often had no other choice but to apply for citizenship in a mountain village.

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quality of any tract of grazing land is seldom homogeneous. In these circumstances the best grass must be reserved for the pregnant ewes to strengthen them before lambing, and afterwards to maintain their milk yield at the highest possible level. For the prosperity of the stani depends on the crop of lambs and the amount of milk that is sold to the cheese merchant.

The physical plan of a stani in winter varies in detail with the character of the grazing but certain features are almost always present. The huts of the stani, the group of co-operating families, are established on or close to the best grassland, on flat ground, sheltered from the prevailing wind, and as near as possible to water, although in practice a spring or well may be a mile away and sometimes farther. The huts are generally close together but in no regular pattern; although if brothers, as is generally the case, form the nucleus of the group, they build their homes next to one another with the huts of cousins and other relatives on the periphery. The size of the winter stani varies. It is restricted, as I have suggested in the previous chapter, by the difficulties of finding enough winter grazing land. But a lower limit is also drawn by the minimum requirement of four active adult shepherds and a young goatherd, a working force that makes it barely possible to work the scheme of shepherding that has been described.

In November, when the sheep arrive from the mountains, the pregnant ewes are not allowed to pasture indiscriminately on the better grasslands (γαλαροτόπι) reserved for their use after lambing. Until Christmas, when the lambing period begins, they graze only on the rougher and higher sections of this grassland perhaps a mile, or more, from the huts. In this area the women help the shepherds to build a circular sheep-fold (γρέκι) constructed from bundles of brushwood tied to one another and sometimes secured to posts. In this the ewes sleep and find some relief from the cold and the driving rain. Outside the women erect a small refuge of branches and thatch (χαλατζούκα) for the two shepherds who guard them.

In the early days of December the women tie together branches to make wooden frames, 5 ft. 6 in. in height and 4 ft. wide (λαπέζι), on which they interlace other more pliable branches and bind bundles of reeds, grass, or ferns. With these portable frames the shepherds and their women set up another

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high, and a narrow three-foot wide roof of thatch inclined towards the centre of the pen, which has an elliptical form. Goats are less resistant to cold weather than sheep, and the kids which are born towards the end of December very easily contract pneumonia during the first six weeks of life. After the kids are born the goats graze during the day on rough ground not too far distant from the pen which is itself positioned close to the huts but away from the sheep-fold. They return in the evening to feed their kids during the night, but the latter remain in the pen during the day enclosed for warmth in a small conical thatched shelter (τσάρκος) built into the wall at the far end of the pen. But the Sarakatsani add that a further reason for keeping them in the pen during the day is that they are greedy and ferocious feeders. After four weeks the women begin to feed the kids with the leaves of bushes which they cut and carry into the pen. Each day they are grazed for an hour or two on any convenient piece of rough ground. Finally, in the early days of March the goatherds 'cut' the kids from their mothers, and the flock returns to its distant pastures. The kids sleep alone in the pen each night and are grazed by a young boy during the day.

The summer dispositions of the stani are different and simpler. The leader of a stani is allotted by the president of the village two areas of grazing: one for milking ewes, and another for the remainder of his flock—the rams and sterile ewes, and the winter's ewe lambs (the 'sterpha', and the 'zigouria') which are now merged into one flock. The two areas are not necessarily adjacent and both are generally far from the village, two or three hours' steep climbing away. The families remain in the village in houses or huts and are able to turn away from their exclusive concern for the animals which held every moment of their attention during the winter months. The difficult period of the year is over and they now turn outwards, as it were, to the affairs of the total community, to betrothals, marriages, quarrels, and mutual criticism; and to their relations of clientage and hostility to the villagers of Zagori.

Meanwhile, however, the Sarakatsani continue to sell their milk throughout June and until the last days of July. A cheese merchant sets up a station positioned to serve a number of neighbouring grazing areas. And where the boundaries of these

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grazing areas permit the arrangement, four or five milking pens of different stanis may be conveniently within sight of the cheese-maker's hut.

Summer is not entirely without its anxieties. In June the rams are allowed to run with the milking ewes, each ram, on average, covering twenty-five ewes. An early and successful mating season (μαρκάλος) is important because it promises few sterile ewes, lambing before the hard winter weather sets in, and earlier supplies of milk. Before the end of July the cheese-maker departs, and the shepherds begin to enjoy a period of relative ease. What milk the ewes continue to give during the early days of August before lactation finally ceases, is used, like the milk that is taken before the first of February and during the ten days of the journey to the mountains, to make a rough 'feta' cheese for the family's own use.

* * *

The needs of the sheep in a particular physical and political environment, and the arrangements made by the Sarakatsani to meet them, have certain consequences for Sarakatsan social life. One of these concerns seasonal differences. In the winter the community is geographically more dispersed, stanis travel far in different directions to find their winter grass and very often they do not have other Sarakatsani as their immediate neighbours. On the other hand the stani itself is physically more concentrated. A sheep requires only a quarter of an acre of good grass in the plain as against half an acre or more in the mountains. The stani is turned in on its own affairs. The huts of the stani are on the grazing land and the group of families is concerned almost exclusively with the problems of lambing, milk, and the protection of the animals against cold and wolves. In the summer, for reasons which have been mentioned in the previous chapter, stanis are generally smaller, and sometimes may be no larger than a single family. The stani is also dispersed. The families live in houses or huts in the village, the shepherds with the two flocks of sheep and the goats are far above the village, and are separated from one another. Yet the community itself is more concentrated than in winter. In the local group of families that graze the land of the same village, the huts or houses of the different families are in sight and often

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sound of one another. And although the grazing areas high above the village are spatially more extensive than in winter, they are, however, overstocked. Shepherds have a common grazing boundary with the sheep of two or three other stanis on whose grass they systematically trespass. Between families unconnected by kinship or marriage, relations, acted out during these months in terms of reciprocal hostility and theft, are more intense than in winter. Summer, indeed, is the time for quarrels. It is also the season of festivals. It is true that, if the total community is less dispersed than in winter, this is a relative difference since it is still disposed over an area of some 390 square miles. But summer shepherding conditions allow shepherds the possibility of visiting kinsmen who live at a distance. At weddings and village festivals kinsmen are able to meet and exchange their news, and unrelated men have the opportunity to observe one another critically. In summer, generally, social exchanges whether friendly or hostile are both more frequent and more ardent.

Practical arrangements for the care of the flock have a further consequence. Personal and family honour and pride, which are fundamental values of the community, breed a spirit of intense and aggressive competitiveness that sometimes threatens even the relations of unmarried brothers, more commonly the co-operation between more distant kin in the same stani, and frequently provokes verbal or physical quarrels between shepherds unrelated by kinship or marriage. Yet the simple circumstance that within the one stani each shepherd is physically isolated, or with only a single companion, in the service of the different flocks which have been described, limits the potential moments of disharmony in the family and the stani. The animals allow their protectors no rest except when they sleep themselves; otherwise they must continually graze to remain alive and the shepherds must continually follow them because of the absence of fencing and the presence of wolves and sometimes of human thieves. Each shepherd is insulated, as it were, by his work. In the winter, moreover, the shepherds may be more or less isolated from contact with other unrelated shepherds since there is often no grazing boundary with another stani. In the summer, it is true, there may be common grazing boundaries with two or three different stanis across which shepherds face

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to be imprudent to display the girl in case she did not please the groom's representative. Girls marry strictly in accordance with the order of birth and if the eldest unmarried daughter is ugly or unhealthy a family will sometimes try to deceive an inexperienced negotiator into believing that a younger and more personable sister is the next in order to marry. In any event, whether the bride was particularly ill favoured or not, it was considered wise that the groom's people should remain in ignorance of the bride's appearance until the wedding day. And this was the more easily achieved twenty years ago when the Sarakatsani did not live in, or generally close to, the mountain villages. In the modern betrothal feast, the future bride appears only about an hour before the groom's party are due to depart, that is between four and five o'clock in the morning. By this time the rings have been exchanged and there is no way of retreat left open to the bridegroom. The girl appears in the doorway with a tray of Turkish delight and small glasses of ouzo which she offers to each member of the other party in turn, including her future husband. She disappears, to return a quarter of an hour later with cups of coffee which she again offers to the bridegroom and his kinsmen. The groom's kinsmen invariably demand that the girl should appear much earlier in the proceedings before the rings have been exchanged, as indeed she ought to do if the village custom were strictly adhered to. Invariably, the girl's father and brothers refuse the request, and it is often this refusal which is the beginning of the brawling and quarrelling between the two groups. The traditional seclusion of the girl in a relative's hut, the present-day precaution to produce her only when the rings have been exchanged, the practice of trickery and the fear of it, all indicate the quality of the relations which exist between the two sides at the moment they enter into this contract.

The betrothal contract amongst the Sarakatsani is entirely secular and it is an agreement between families rather than individuals. The groom contracts to marry a certain man's daughter whose face he may never have seen rather than a particular person of the opposite sex. If he withdraws from this agreement, not only does he break his pledged word but he damages the girl's reputation in a way which makes it impossible for her to make an honourable marriage in the future. For it

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indirect pressures, such as the withdrawal of moral and practical support from the husband or, if his conduct is not widely known, the threat to ridicule him in public. But these, it may be added, are powerful sanctions.

The content of co-operation between affines is not significantly different from the kind of assistance given and received by cognatic kinsmen. Since affines generally live in a different neighbourhood, it happens not infrequently that a wife's brother acts as negotiator in arranging a marriage for a younger brother of his sister's husband. The fact that he is willing to perform this service is in itself a recommendation of the prospective bridegroom's family. It is also because they generally live in different neighbourhoods that a man sometimes turns to a close affine when he is in difficulty over the pasturing of his animals. When Apostolis Zygos had a few acres of grazing land in excess of his winter grazing needs, he rented them to the husband of his brother's daughter for a sum somewhat lower than an offer made to him by an unrelated neighbour. The neighbour was hard-pressed for grass and later showed his resentment, it is alleged, by stealing two of Zygos' lambs. The niece's husband brought a hundred of his sheep from his own winter grazing, forty miles away, and employed a local village boy to assist one of his brothers in watching them. Thus, affinal ties, like relations within the kindred, although they often involve physical separation, generally take precedence over the more tenuous obligations of being a good neighbour.

Another example of help given to an affine illustrates the variable character of this assistance. In the territory of certain of the eastern villages of Zagori the Sarakatsani do not live in or close to the village but build their encampments, each stani separately, some miles away and close to their grazing land. Alec Katris lives three miles from the village of Laista. His small ten-year-old daughter Chrysanthe cannot make this long journey to school each day unaccompanied. And since Alec has no kinsman or affine who lives close to Laista, he sends his daughter for the summer term to live with the family of the brother of his sister's husband who lives at Skamneli, a neighbouring village, where she attends the school. There is no money payment for the girl's board but at the beginning of the

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4. Stani in Winter

[facing p. 208]

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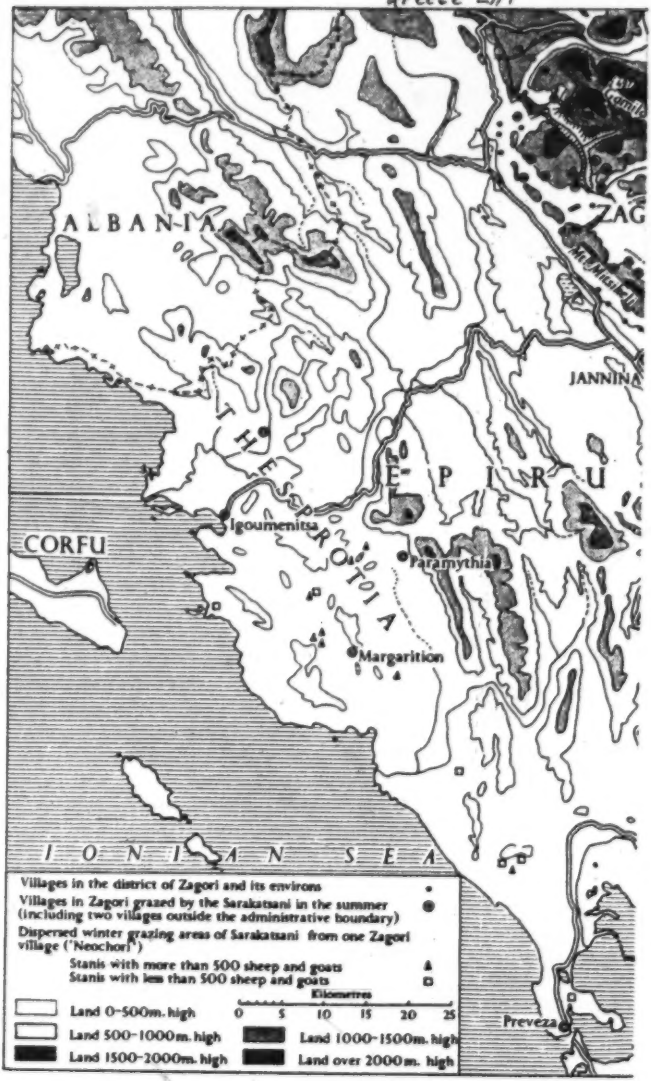


Map of the Epirus Indicating Summer and Winter Grazing Areas of the Zagori Sarakatsani

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[P364-B]

Zagori Greece EH1

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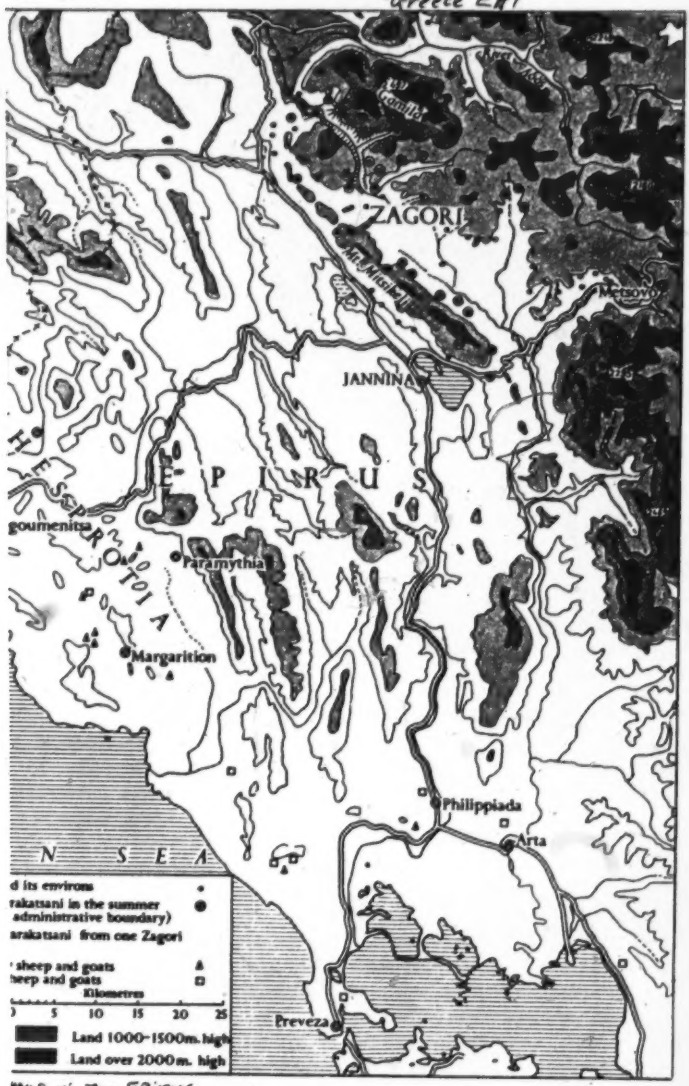


Map of the Epirus

Indicating Summer and Winter Grazing Areas of the Zagori Sarakatsani

reached to the ground, capes of so coarse a weave and so stiff with rain that they looked as though their incumbents could almost step forth and leave them standing like sentry boxes. I next saw them in March the following year, when I was riding across Greek Macedonia and stayed a night in one of their smoky wigwams. Since then I had seen them again and again, all over northern Greece, in the plains in winter and in the mountains in summer, but always on the skyline or in the middle distance. True nomads, these self-appointed Ishmaels hover on the outskirts of ordinary Greek life as fleetingly as a mirage, only manifesting themselves to ordinary mortals in far-away glimpses. Suddenly, at a ravine's twist far from the scorched lowlands, one comes across their impermanent hamlets of conical huts on high ledges of the Pindus and the Rhodope mountains and in the sierras of Roumeli; and in winter, gazing down from the snows that have banished them, one can discern their clustering huts in the plains, the ascending smoke, and the slowly grazing flocks.

Every spring their beasts and their long caravans of horses, laden with all they possess, can be seen winding up into the thawed mountains, or halted around a sudden village of somber tents, to stream downhill again later to the withered autumnal plains which the rains will soon turn green. One discovers them binding lopped branches and osier twigs into the hemispherical skeletons of the huts which will house them for the season; shelters whose blackened and molting thatch will later mark where they have settled for a few months and vanished from again. Sometimes a far-off barking and the murmur of bells hint at their presence deep in the ilex woods or along a dazzling canyon where nothing stirs except, perhaps, a pair of floating eagles. Besides these rare apparitions, this fugitive community of about eighty thousand souls and of flocks amounting to several million head seems to have the gift of invisibility.

UNLIKE the seminomads of Greece — the Koutzovlachs and the Karagounis, who all have mountain villages from which to migrate and to which they return after their half-yearly journeys in search of winter pasture — the Sarakatsáns have nothing more solid than their abodes of wicker and rush. All of them, however, look to some range of mountains, some fold or cordillera where they have grazed their flocks for centuries of summers, as their home. Their lowland pastures are more variable, an uncertain sojourn with few claims on their allegiance. At the turn of the century the Sarakatsáns of northern Greece were the

had pocketed our tickets, we watched him work his perilous way along the duckboard of the corridorless train like a cat burglar. A large open cattle car was hitched to the rear of the train. A sound of raucous singing was carried along the line, and a blue flag whirled overhead on a long pole. The conductor, settling in our carriage for a chat on his return journey, confirmed what we had surmised. "Yes, it's a Sarakatsán bridegroom on his way to a wedding up at Sikarayia. They've been drinking for days." When we pulled up at the next wayside halt, the whole party leaped, shouting and singing, to the platform, the banner aswirl, and bore down on a small group waiting under an acacia tree. The white-clad groom and his cronies returned a few moments later, carrying the bride, who was attired in a stiff black and white costume of angular and Aztec strangeness, by her elbows. She sailed along the platform with the passivity of a sacred image being transported from shrine to shrine. As the shaft of the standard-bearer's banner careered past, I saw that it was topped by a pomegranate, and the same fertility symbol was affixed to the top and the two arms of a beribboned wooden cross. When they were all aboard, the groom's party fired their guns into the sky, and singing and intermittent firing accompanied the rest of the journey.

"*Paraxenoi anthropoi*," vouchsafed the conductor, after clicking his tongue censoriously a dozen times. "Odd people —" They did seem a contrast to the lofty Victorian stateliness of our carriage. He told us that the groom was the son of a great *tsellingas* — the head of a clan, as it were, of Sarakatsán shepherds — in fact, an *architsellingas*, called Kosta Zogas, who wintered at Sikarayia and pastured his sheep in the Rhodope Mountains in summer, not far from the flocks of the bride's father, another *architsellingas*, called Vrysas, who wintered near Souphlí, along the banks of the Hebrus. "You'd think," he went on, "when you see them in their rush hovels and their old capes, that they were poor. Not a bit of it! They've got pots of money. Literally pots. They fill up pitchers with gold sovereigns, and bury them — no one knows how many — whole fortunes in the ground."

SIKARAYIA turned out to be a village of beautifully thatched Sarakatsán huts. Giant beehives swelled and tapered in tiers of cropped reed which overlapped with the precision of the plating on armadilloes' backs, and all of them were topped by wooden crosses near holes in the thatch through which thin blue smoke curled. Black-clad Sara-

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181 by sun, wind, rain, snow, and hail. They give more than an impression, during their occasional descents to the lowlands, of their enemies the wolves, and, still more, of eagles. They live beyond the reach of the authorities, and the division between pastoral life and lawlessness is often vague. They spell, in fact, independence and inviolacy. Wherever they are to be found in the Greek peninsula, these mountaineers represent exemption; and the most unhampered and nonconformist of all, except for their private and tribal strait-jackets of untransgressable behavior, are the Sarakatsáns. They belong to an older and shaggier scene than the Arcadian dream and Greek Sicily. They predate and survive both the idyll and the eclogue.

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[101] I first caught a glimpse of them in December, when I was nineteen, on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria between Varna and Burgas, and I saw them again in early spring four months later near
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[269] the Struma River in Macedonia, during the Venizelist revolution of 1935, after the battle at the bridge of Orliàko.

For reasons I will not describe here, I found myself trotting eastward through the late March afternoon along the road to Serres and Drama, on a borrowed horse with a friendly squadron of light cavalry in the victorious army of General Kondylis. We were slightly in advance of the main royalist army, which, with its cannon and infantry and trucks and wagons and baggage train, snaked away behind us in a long loop of dust. The march had turned into something of a carnival. After the musketry fire from both banks of the river and shelling from the hills behind and a minimum of casualties on either side, resistance had caved in and our opponents were surrendering or dispersing eastward. The day had culminated, for my new friends and for me, in the moment when they had actually drawn their sabers and galloped thunderously and bloodlessly across the wooden bridge of Orliàko against an already vanished enemy, in the nearest any of us would ever get to a cavalry charge. Buoyed up along the road by exhilaration and relief, my companions were singing music-hall songs from Athens. Unslinging their
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carbines, they took potshots from the saddle at the
● [361] birds on the telegraph lines. Suddenly, beyond the heads of all these cheerful horsemen, on a high wooded ridge about three miles away, loomed a string of those dark wigwams that had interested me in December, and I decided to defect from my companions for a night and (one horseman moving faster than an army) catch up with them next day by shortcuts across the mountains. After light-hearted farewells and shouted rendezvous for drinking together in Serres and Drama and Komotini, I watched them jingle away with their

S 114 steel scabbards clinking against their spurs; and then pounded off over the plain toward the hills and the far-sounding goat bells.

S 123 [361] [233] When, suddenly, at the heart of a deafening whirlpool of half-wild dogs, I drew rein at the camp toward sunset, it turned out to be a *stani* of about fifty huts scattered among the trees around a spring. The whole place was alive with golden evening dust and bleating and barking and bells. The ewes and the she-goats, followed by their shrill young, were being driven with crooks and shouts and ear-sundering whistles and the heckling of dogs into a great semicircular pen of wicker and woven thorns and thatch on a steep slope. S [234] Once inside, they were herded toward a narrow lych-gate at one end of it, where they were seized by their horns, their tails, or their hind legs, clamped back to front between a shepherd's knees, and milked under protest, a few deft seconds for each captive, into bronze caldrons. Despite my brief acquaintance with Greece, I knew that strange arrivals in country places unloose a friendly hubbub of curiosity and inquisition. Not so here. The aloof drovers doubled the diligence of their tasks; their shouts became louder, the milking [241] more urgent. For the first time, I saw these Biblical men at close range; their black cloaks and their hoods gave them the look of Benedictines who had gone native. There were glimpses, too, of the amazing magpie geometry of the women rising from their dim looms and appearing for a moment in the threshold of the smoke-plumed cones. An authoritative old man with a sweeping mustache and an elaborate crook finally silenced the dogs [227] and asked me what I wanted. I could understand little of what he said; I had spent the two previous months, my first in Greece, in snowy Mount Athos, trying to convert my imperfect ancient Greek into the rudiments of the modern, and the Sarakatsán dialect was a further barrier. When they had gathered that, in spite of patched breeches and puttees, I was not a soldier — no sword or gun! — in fact, a foreigner from England, alone, and too young and as yet unpredatory-looking to be capable of much harm, their reserve began to thaw.

S 123 [369] What was going on? They pointed down at the army glinting across the plain below through its long cocoon of dust, and the blast of a trumpet came softly to our ears. What had all that noise been about, over by the Struma? *Bam-boum-boum? Rat-tat-tat-tat? N'tang n'tang?* I gleaned with surprise from their half-understood questions that they had only the roughest notion of what was afoot. They knew that there had been a *kinema* —

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121 182 perspective it must first of all be concerned with this originality and try to isolate it and bring it out. To achieve this it is important to specify clearly:

1. The concrete problems which the Sarakatsani must face.

2. The conditions and possibilities which his natural and human environment impose on him and offer him for the solution of these problems.

3. Finally, and above all, the system of actual solutions which the Sarakatsani has developed in relation to the two preceding points, hence the socio-cultural system of Sarakatsani society.

This last point will furnish an answer to the question posed above. Moreover, it will form the basis of our conclusions with regard to our knowledge of the Sarakatsani from their works.

To pass from the general to the particular, the problems the Sarakatsani faces are:

--Control of nature and the biological environment (plants, animals) for utilitarian ends.

--The relations of the Sarakatsani with his fellow man and with surrounding society, for the following purposes:

--a complete enjoyment of natural resources,

--a harmonious and effective coexistence,

--a way of life guaranteeing to all subsistence, security and posterity.

/5/ --His relations with the great beyond.

--Finally, problems relating to the esthetic of the Sarakatsani and his sense of beauty.

It will be seen that these problems, common to all societies, are in no way peculiar to him.

[361] [221] On the other hand, the conditions in which they must be resolved are altogether specific and derive from the fact that as shepherds the Sarakatsani live outside all urban or rural centers, spending the summer in the mountains, in winter in the valleys, according to the needs of their flocks.

/5 cont./

121 182 361 It is clear, therefore, that the fundamental parameters of their existence are the herding of small livestock; the seasonal displacement in the form of nomadism; the fact that they are situated in inhabited regions; their isolation from the surrounding society; the maintainance with that society of a minimum of necessary relations connected largely with their activity as shepherds; the physico-chemical nature of the soil and the terrain, the climate, the flora and fauna, characteristics of the Hellenic Peninsula that is their habitat.

121 182 194 This is not all. Sarakatsani society seems to have its origins in Hellenic society. Many aspects of its culture are found to be inspired by very ancient Hellenic culture. Now this fact constitutes another very important parameter, a temporal dimension that is not negligible and that we should constantly keep in mind as much as the others, all during our investigation. This aspect should figure, and will actually figure in our analysis.

However, since the question of the ethnic origins of the Sarakatsani has been disputed, it is advisable to devote a few pages to it, if only to justify what we have just said.

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194 Since the evidence and the objective data concerning the origin of the Sarakatsani are sadly lacking, the way is open for theoretical discussion.

A considerable number of historians, geographers, linguists, literary men, etc., Greeks and outsiders, have advanced widely divergent hypotheses, presenting the Sarakatsani by turns as Turks, Italiotes, Rumanians, Arumani, direct descendants of the Greek nomads of antiquity, etc.

/6/ A succinct account of their theories will give an idea of these hypotheses.

(113) Authors who maintain that the Sarakatsani are not Greek:

a) The Frenchman, A. van Gennep (7),

/18 cont./

165 Now the life which the Saracatsan lead is extremely hard. We do not have any information on infant mortality, but it is probable that natural selection takes place, favoring the strongest and most resistant organisms, so that those who survive are physiologically endowed to reach an advanced age.

It is therefore not out of the question that the presumed longevity of the Saracatsan corresponds to reality. But this applies to only a fraction of individuals, those who have already been selected by nature. Under these circumstances, Sarakatsani longevity remains relative.

On this point, as on so many others, we can offer only hypotheses.

However, it is true that the observer is able to perceive among the Sarakatsani the presence of a considerable number of old people.

589 --Marriage is also very strong here. In view of the fact that the entire social life of the Saracatsan is based on the family, celibacy is unknown and is even considered disgraceful.

582 In general, the men marry between the ages of 25 and 30, and
586 the women between 20 and 25. Divorce and remarriage are forbidden.
587 At any rate, they are never practiced.

361 These phenomena are linked to another phenomenon which, is dem-
221 ographic in nature but which, in the factors that /19/ determine it, touches on the ecological aspect (4)

[113] 4. The term "ecology" discussed as such by the theoreticians (C. Lewelyn and A. Hauthorn: L'écologie humaine in La Sociologie au XX^e siecle, p. 477 f.) is used here to refer to the dialectical relations which develop between a group of human beings and their geographic and natural invironment.

of the Sarakatsani world. We are referring to the migratory movements of our herders--movements which take the form of seasonal displacements.

In spring, more precisely on Saint George's day (April 23), the

/19 cont./
361 221 Sarakatsani depart for the mountains. And in the fall, around the 26 October, the festical of Saint Demetrius, they leave the mountains and come down to the plains.

[233] These movements are ascribable to the very method of herding (5)

[113] 5. See M. Sorre: Les fondements de la géographie humaine, vol. II, part 2, p. 646-647.

that the Saracatsan carry on and to the needs of their flocks, on which they are absolutely dependent.

233 [133] In fact, once transplanted to the Greek mountains which are formed of fissured limestone, the Sarakatsani were able to carry on but a single economic activity: the herding of sheep and goats. [137] These two species are the only ones that could derive benefit from the meager natural pastures which are found on these steep slopes with [113] their scrub vegetation. (6)

6. See P. Veyret: Géographie de l'élevage, p. 22 and 26.

132 The surface of the land alone presents numerous inconveniences. It is known that temperature drops with altitude. A rise of 200 meters is the equivalent of a distance of 300 kilometers in the direction of a more northerly latitude. (7)

7. See P. Veyret: Ibid., p. 41.

132 233 22 36 Winter thus comes rapidly in the mountains of the Mediterranean zone, and it is particularly severe there, despite the generally temperate climate prevailing in the Hellenic Peninsula. Vegetation can no longer thrive, humidity reaches a degree harmful to the health of the sheep, the snow endangers their lives. A change of habitat thus becomes necessary. The Sarakatsani then come down into the valleys in search of more verdant and climatically milder regions.

When spring arrives, a spring which in Greece actually lasts only a few days, the valleys and grasslands dry up rapidly, the days are too warm for the livestock to endure the temperature, (8)

[171] 8. It is very characteristic to note that the sedentary stock-raisers of Greece, the "Karagounides"

132 /19 cont./
233 of Thessaly, for example, pasture their flocks in
221 summer during the night and shut them in their pens
361 during the day.
[191] and the Sarakatsani find themselves /20/ obliged to set out again for the mountains, there to find the vegetation ensured by moisture and coolness. (9)

9. M. Sorre: Ibid., p. 635.

233 Nonetheless, the livestock reproduce and their numbers increase
221 with time. Now, the large herds need vast spaces--which means they
361 must be driven in search of pasture, and the fact that large pasturages are not numerous in Greece must be taken into account. That is why the movements of the Sarakatsani become nomadic. Never, except by pure coincidence, do groups know in advance where they are going to settle in their next move. It is the availability of pasturage that determines their movements.

233 Nothing in this process justifies our saying that the Sarakatsani
463 turned toward nomadism as a "calling." The determinancy which comes into play here is so clear that it is altogether useless to seek another especially not in the domain of group psychology, or to bring in a vague concept such as "ethnic vocation" which can only obscure the
233 problem. It is indeed strange that a certain number of theorists (10)
463
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10. Among these theorists we must mention P. Veyret: Ibid, p. 71.

believe in this calling of the nomad who becomes herder only because he is first nomad and others (11) justifiably arise against them.

[113] 11. Jean Brunhes: La Géographie Humaine, vol. I, p. 410, M. Sorre: Ibid., p. 635; Birket Smith: Histoire de la Civilisation, p. 195, etc.

to preach the old truth expressed long ago by Aristotle: (12)

12. Aristotle: Politics.

One is a nomad because one is a herder.

/20 cont./

233 182 318 However, if these last paragraphs have brought out the influence that the geographical and biological environment has had on the Sarakatsani, it is necessary also to mention the influence which their activity as herders has on the landscape itself.

233 318 For an observer it is easy to identify the area occupied by our herders. In those regions the ground is close-cropped. Seen from a sufficient distance it seems dotted with shrubs between which a sparse vegetation gives the impression of a green or yellowish carpet. In the valleys the shrubs are absent. But the carpet is always there, testifying to the presence of the flocks. Nature carries the [161] imprint of the passage of Sarakatsani and this on a very considerable scale in view of their number (according to approximate reckonings they represent a population of 90,000 to /21/ 110,000) and the number of their livestock which represents the core of sheep herding in Greece.

The effects of this imprint on the climate, the temperature and the water courses are evident.

If the life of the Sarakatsani is closely dependent on nature, the latter, in turn, is transformed by them in a manner which is just as significant.

Geographically speaking, these phenomena are noted around the large mountain ranges of the country, whether one looks at Pindus and its ramifications (Agrapha, Orthrys, Vardoussia, Parnassus), the Olympus chain including the Chassia, Vermion, Kaimaktsalan, or the Rodhopi chain including Phalakron, etc.

361 The Sarakatsani establish themselves on the slopes as well as in the valleys. The country they prefer is continintal Greece.

There are none on the islands or in the Peloponnesus. However, [174] we have reason to believe that there used to be some Sarakatsani groups in the northern Peloponnesus. But from all evidence, they were rapidly assimilated and have become peasants.

Thus their geographical habitat is confined to the areas we have

/21 cont./
361 enumerated. However, that has been the case only since the end of
361 the first world war. Until that time, and particularly during the
175 period when the Ottoman Empire occupied the Balkans, our herders also moved into more distant countries, going as far as Yugoslavia and southern Bulgaria. At times they crossed the Dardanelles to reach the region of Pergamum and Asia Minor.

361 Since then, certain political events, the rupture between East
175 and West in particular, have impeded these movements.
178 The Sarakatsani habitat has thus shrunk remarkably. And the repercussions of this reduction are very grave, if not catastrophic, as we shall see in what follows.

Space, this friend of the nomadic herders, has now become their enemy. And now we discover a space influencing their lives in a new way.

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361 The localities where the Sarakatsani live have undergone still
182 another transformation. We refer to the functional and utilitarian
233 organization of the space they occupy--an organization that has two distinct aspects: the accomodations and tasks intended for /22/ men and the accomodations intended for the livestock and their husbandry. We must mention the various arrangements that are relevant:

First, the dwelling huts. (13)

13. See below p. 69-95.

Second, the sheepfolds and enclosures for milking and shearing. (14)

14. See below p. 95-100.

All the arrangements and measures related to grazingland. (15)

15. See below p. 100 ff.

361 The distance between the sheepfolds and the dwelling huts varies
221 according to the season. In winter they are all close together. In
233 summer, however, they may be separated by several kilometers.

The winter camp, huts and sheepfolds, must be erected in a relatively sheltered place far from hollows which, during rains, might

/22 cont./

361 become flooded. The entrance of the huts faces south to protect them
221 as much as possible from the north wind. The sheepfolds are built
233 on gentle slopes in order to facilitate the discharge of water and liquid manure. However, while the sheepfolds are always situated close to the pasturage, the pens of the goats are placed as far away as possible, on some rocky point where tough shrubs grow.

361 It is thus, as we see, the configuration of the ground that
233 determines the construction of the camp, always accomodating the needs of people and animals.

361 The summer camp is clearly divided into two parts: the place
22 occupied by the huts, constructed according to the rules given above,
233 and the place occupied by the flocks. But the latter place does not have sheepfolds. Actually, during the summer, the shelters built for
[417] the animals are very rudimentary. Thanks to the mildness of the
[824] climate, the shepherds simply confine the livestock in enclosures made by placing prickly shrubs upon one another and they do so during the night only, so that the animals will not disperse. The surveillance
[231] and safety of the livestock is always ensured by the shepherds themselves and by their dogs.

Neither in the winter camp nor in the summer camp does one see any building for the benefit of the group as a whole; there is no place of public assembly (even in the open), no path, no fountain--a feature /absence?/ altogether characteristic of their life.

361 /23/ On the other hand, a close observation of the aggregate of huts shows very distinct small groups, as well as relatively isolated huts. The center of the aggregate, or one of the commanding spots is occupied by a solid hut, large and carefully finished. The
[621] method of social and familial organization of the Sarakatsani, which
[474] consists of the Tseligato and its chief, the extended family and the
[612] conjugal family, (16)

16. See below, second part.

here also leaves its peculiar mark.

/23 cont./

361 621 474 612 The small groups correspond to the extended families, the isolated huts to conjugal families, the carefully finished hut to the chief, and the whole to the Tséligato.

[113] This organization is thus found to be engraved on the soil. (17)

17. See M. Halbwachs: Morphologie Sociale, p. 9.

233 The sheepfolds are not unusual in this respect. From their number one can deduce only the size of the flock they shelter; each contains 100 to 200 animals.

361 [796] In reality, the organization of space is much more complex. The Sarakatsani also single out evil places, others constituting the abode of supernatural beings, etc. All this will be examined in connection with the study of their magical and religious beliefs.

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361 233 474 The encampment of our herders is called "konakia." This word, of Turkish origin, primarily means "dwelling." It is in this sense that it has been adopted into the popular language of all the inhabitants of continental Greece. However, among the Sarakatsani it also refers to the outbuildings of the dwellings, the sheepfolds and the installations for the tending of the animals in a word: the entire space they occupy.

[622] Moreover, the name of the chief of the group is added to the word "konakia"; and the different places occupied by the different groups are called "konakia of so-and-so."

The word "stani," also common to the herders of Greece, indicates the spot where the animal husbandry takes place.

Now, with respect to their referrent there is no difference between the terms "konakia" and "stani"; the nuance depends on the point of view from which one considers them: habitation in the first instance, husbandry in the second.

361 233 Finally, one finds a third term, "mandria," which /24/ designates again in general, with the cluster of shelters for the flocks. But this term should not be confused with the preceding ones, since it refers

361 233 /24 cont./
to the general technology of sheep herders and not to space.

233 It remains for us to speak of the pastures and of dispositions relating, in a general way, to the feeding of the animals. The examination of this problem will be part of the study of the technology of herding.

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621 [163] [165] The social incidence of all the phenomena described is very important. The high birth rate and longevity contribute to the creation of large families and long lineages. There follows from this a question of organization and economic expectations. For the [888] same reasons, the category of "the aged" becomes large. The situation and social condition of this class, whose presence necessarily complicates social differentiation, constitutes a separate question.

621 233 221 The /seasonal/ migrations cause variations of intensity in Sarakatsani social life. The summer encampment, divided in two as we have seen, brings about a separation of active men from women. The first occupy themselves exclusively with herding following the flocks. The second remain in the encampment. On the other hand, during the winter, men and women live together. Thus, the large festivals, the [796] [585] celebration of marriages, the collective performance of certain rites of a magico-religious order take place only within the framework of the winter set-up, never during the summer. The calendar that prescribes all these activities and is established on the basis of the socio-economic occupations of this people, and therefore in accordance with the times when the participation of all proves possible. (18)

18. See below, the chapters devoted to magic and religion.

233 361 197 Finally, the displacements also involve contacts with the surrounding society through which the Sarakatsani pass; a certain number of measures and arrangements assure the successful outcome of the encounter.

/77 cont./
343 branches and given a coating of potter's clay; the place of an opening
333 always being kept. As in the preceding construction a space is left
252 after the opening. When the outer coating is sufficiently dry the heap of stones is removed by drawing them out one by one through the opening; then the oven is lighted.

Thus, the branches remaining inside are burned up and the clay hardens.

343 c) The chicken coop: this small building for the chickens could
235 have been described together with the shelters for animals.

However, since this very limited husbandry belongs in the category of domestic activities, we have deemed it preferable to classify the chicken coop under this same heading.

There are two types of chicken coops among the Sarakatsani: one is a small building of stones 40 to 50 centimeters high and 80 centimeters wide, clothed /surrounded?/ with boughs and covered with straw. This type of building presents nothing exceptional, and one sees similar ones no matter where.

/78/ The other type is a tiny round hut, a veritable miniature of the dwelling hut already described. Figure 61 adequately shows this type of chicken coop; it is unecessary to dwell specially on a description of it. (18)

[178] [361]

18. The existence of a chicken coop among a Sarakatsani group gives evidence, in most cases, as to whether they are transhumant or turning towards a sedentary life. The chicken coop is thus a sign of "transition."

/92 cont./

232 [413] [237] which permits him to reach the brain and the cyst. With a hook (small elongated implement ending in a kind of hook) he removes the cyst, replaces the bone, covers the spot of entry with beeswax and applies a dressing. After several days the wound heels and the animal recovers.

233 [685] [577] [231] The safety of the livestock

The serious enemies of the flocks are wild beasts (chiefly wolves), on the one hand, and livestock thieves on the other. (A short time ago, the latter were very numerous, this type of theft being considered a virtue among herders. Against them Sarakatsani keep large dogs, very savage and very dangerous. These dogs do not hesitate to grapple with wolves, and it is for this reason that their masters put around their necks a collar studded with iron points.

Moreover, the shepherds always see to it that the flock /93/ does not disperse, for the strayed animals become the specific prey of wolves and thieves. This task is easier when there is a ram or a buck in the flock, since these animals act as the center of attraction for the livestock (ewes and she-goats). Moreover, the sound of their [534] bells (they are huge, some weighing several kilograms) always gives the signal for reassembly of the flock by a conditioned reflex mechanism. This mechanism is so effective that even in the darkest nights the shepherds succeed in regrouping their animals by ringing these bells. /Fig. 74 appears here/

221 233 484 361 [462] Seasonal migrations

The seasonal migrations involve the following arrangements:

At a designated hour, always before dawn, the women set to work; entrusted with the preparations, they gather up the equipment and load it on the backs of the beasts of burden. The men, for their part, "take care of the livestock." When everything is ready, human beings, beasts of burden and flock form a column in the order laid down by tradition. The flocks surrounded by shepherds and dogs set out first.

/93 cont./

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484
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Fig. 74

Then the second part of the column, made up of all the rest, starts moving. Of course, the entire column moves with the rhythm of the flocks; the latter cannot be deprived of grazing, nor rest during the hot hours during the migrations; they must also be milked.

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233
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484
361
(439)

In this connection it must be noted, parenthetically, that in the course of the migration the Sarakatsani do not /94/ make real cheese; they simply let the milk curdle and subsequently sell it as is in the villages through which they pass. The complete preparation of cheese begins again as soon as they arrive at the site of their new settlement.

/94 cont./

221 233 361 484 The nocturnal stops are marked by the following activities:

--Unloading of the animals.

--Pitching of the tents.

--Preparation of the spot where the fire will be kindled to cook the dinner.

[417] --Setting up of the circular enclosures to protect the livestock, made sometimes with the bags containing the equipment, sometimes with thorny shrubs which form a very precarious hedge.

[462] All this work is done by the women.

The next day, at dawn, they recommence the march after having performed the same activities, but in reverse. And the journey continues in the rhythm of the flock until the arrival at the place chosen for the new settlement. It may take several days, sometimes more than a week.

233 Working with the livestock

[434] Strictly speaking, it is a question of the profit that is derived from the flocks, a profit realized from the milk, the shearing and the meat.

233 234 While ewes and she-goats are nursing their young, thay are not milked, or very exceptionally. Weaning, which goes on during the month of January marks the time when the milking commences.

[343] [415] At the hour of milking, ewes and she-goats are led into the "stroungha." Pushed by a shepherd who is inside, the animals leave one by one; they are then stopped by people sitting to the right and left of the exit, who milk them into special receptacles, "kardhari" (fig. 75).

233 234 221 The milking schedules vary according to the date: between the beginning of the month of January and the end of the month of June, the milking takes place twice a day, morning and evening. From the beginning of the month of July until the end of the month of August

596 /159 cont./
264 The meals, which the women take care of each in turn, are taken
[562] together, allowing for the inevitable separation by sex.

If the shepherds find themselves a relatively short distance from
[233] the camp, but nevertheless too far to be able to leave their flocks at mealtime, it is not unusual for a woman or a child to bring them their food.

596 The work then, which is performed jointly, follows the rule of
462 division of tasks according to sex, as shown in the following plan:

Work reserved exclusively for men: the wood craft, the preparation of skins, herding and transactions with the outside.

Work done by the women: the working of wool, the making of clothing building, gathering, the preparation of foods and of bread, lighting and fire.

This division of tasks is the general rule, a rule which naturally involves exceptions and subtle distinctions, chief of which are:

[823] The care and maintenance of goats is left to the women because goats
[233] "are possessed by the devil." Thus, the men must not touch them. They limit themselves with leading them to pasture. All the rest is incumbent on the women, inasmuch as the Sarakatsani believe that women are more competent than the men to enter into relations with unknown forces.

[23] The occasioned raising of pigs and poultry is likewise left to
[235] the women.

[36] We have seen that the leading and the protection of the flocks in
[22] the course of seasonal migrations is the business of the men. The
[484] women take care of the transportation of all belongings and the setting-up of the camp.

[236] The shearing of the sheep is work generally done by the men, although the help of the women is sometimes required. On the other hand, the shearing of goats is an exclusively female task.

[234] In milking, men and women cooperate without differentiation.

[313] The gathering of wood for making various objects is a task for men,
[322]

/179 cont./

He is seldom personally involved in herding, and carries a staff much shorter than that of the other shepherds, a staff /180/ which is also a sign of his rank. Moreover, he is the only one who has a saddle horse.

His dress is more elaborate than that of his men and his hut is always situated in the center of the encampment and built on the highest point.

Generally, his hut has a fretzato (circular enclosure adjoining the hut and forming a court) in which he receives visitors and where the negotiations with merchants take place.

It is he who offers hospitality, not forgetting, however, to write down the expenditures as part of the general cost of the business.

Nothing happens in the Tséligato that he is not advised of. However, his authority never gives him the right to interfere in questions concerning the private lives of the participants.

In the course of performing his functions, the Tséligas may, if he wishes, consult the other men of the Tséligato. Yet this almost never happens. There is only one situation in which he needs the opinion of the experienced shepherds; he inquires of them about the quality of the grass of different pastures meant for the various categories of livestock.

We see by this that the only case in which the opinion of the subjects of the Tséligas might be expressed is in an essentially technical, and not in an administrative matter.

This exception is very characteristic of the status and prestige of the Tséligas who must, above all, act with justice, objectivity, generosity, and prudence. Respected by all, he insures order and peace.

If one or another of the participants shows himself to be undesirable the Tséligas can turn him out before the expiration of his contract, but after the mutual obligations have been settled.

/354 cont./

829 in their lives. Clever management on the part of the men, especially
[596] the heads of families and of the Tséligato, ensures the cohesion of
[621] the group and its good functioning.

829 On all these points, tradition with its models and its precedents offers a solid and permanent support.

[811] From the systematic point of view, all this knowledge is rational,
[562] reflective and adequate. But since this /355/ same knowledge must guide action oriented toward men ("we" or "others"), intuition and symbolism, ideology and myth make their appearance and are strongly felt in their hearts.

* * * *

181 The very fact of the existence of magical manipulations among the
811 Sarakatsani enables us, without resorting to other evaluations, to assess their knowledge of nature, man or animals as limited. Thus a new problem arises, that of the factors that exert an unfavorable influence on knowledge and its development among these herders.

Now, these factors arise from the specific nature of the social framework and the culture of the Sarakatsani. Actually, their social life does not offer any opportunity for knowledge to flower. Among them there are neither groups nor individuals charged or authorized to spend their time advancing it. They do not receive any training in this direction, and they lack educative means. Moreover, they cannot even
[197] benefit from the culture of surrounding society because of their migra-
[361] tions and their isolation. Finally, they are hostile to any new idea, presumed dangerous insofar as it lacks the guarantee of experience.

121 Furthermore, traditional ideas thwart cognitive advance, but from
811 "within" this time. In order for knowledge to be possible, an adequate and preliminary classification of phenomena is indispensable. For it will give birth to concepts and general modes of operation, (5) which

/381 cont./

182 602 571 594 554 [613] The hierarchy of groups within the family (conjugal families, small lineages) is based on the degree of kinship of their head with the communal head; the same is true for individuals, whose hierarchical grouping complies in addition, with criteria of age and sex. The statuses and roles of groups and individuals are likewise determined by the same criteria, with this additional difference for individuals that for them there is a second frame of reference: that of the conjugal family. Individuals are thus subject to two hierarchical chains, which involve two series of roles and statuses still distinguished according to the same criteria.

182 594 181 The demographic density observed in the family group, marriage and birth /rates/ have their origin in the dynamics of this group and the values it adopts (to have many children or to be married constitutes a distinction), in the economy as well as in the conditions of life, which means kinship, herding, isolation. Similarly, nomadism plays a special 182 361 233 role with regard to technology, which is simple and within the reach of all (crafts and construction, including the organization of living space).

182 462 As far as the division of labor between the sexes is concerned, it, likewise is determined by the way of life, as well as by the quasi-patriarchal tinge of the family, resulting in an organization based on the primacy of men (production is confined chiefly to the men and consumption chiefly to the women); in return, this organization finds support in the 182 291 261 181 way the work is divided. Patterns in the use of clothing and food are influenced by isolation (autarchy), nomadism (simplicity - rapidity), resources and raw materials (products of herding--milk, wool), values (sobriety, chastity and above all, societal control of women's sexuality - frugal diet, absence of luxury, clothing which hides the woman's lines) and social and cosmological ideas (the /382/ dress showing rank or status

/404 cont./
cities and their life. Some even went abroad (one of our informants served in Korea). It is therefore easy to imagine that upon their return home they became likely agents for changes.

b) Communal pastures were opened to the Sarakatsani. According to the Greek system of use of national land, each village has meadows for the inhabitants engaged in animal husbandry; they have the exclusive use of them and benefit by easy terms. The Sarakatsani took advantage of them. They set up their huts on the edge of villages and thereafter practiced transhumance. Moreover, they took part in the life of the community and some were even elected municipal councillors.

c) In the third place, along with herding they sought supplementary jobs, which they performed in the village. The prospect of profit broke the shackles imposed on the women. They too started to engage in certain occupations (machine knitting, commercial weaving, paid farm work, work in nearby factories, etc.), and to earn money. Thus, the condition of the woman changed completely from one day to the next.

d) Finally, the Sarakatsani children were compelled to attend school.

Measures benefitting the "landless."

The Sarakatsani without real estate, benefitted from these measures. Plots were distributed at the rate of one per conjugal family. The Sarakatsani established themselves on them, and with credit allotted by state organizations they have begun to build houses and create villages where they engage both in limited herding and farming.

Measures benefitting lessees of pastures.

At the beginning of the second World War the government decreed that all lessees of properties, including pastures, were to remain where they were. Though modified, this /405/ measure is still in force. As a result, all the Sarakatsani profited from it, and from that time have settled on leased sites.

/405 cont./

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233 Finally, socio-economic policy benefitting farmers and herders.

This policy includes:

[452] 1. Financing by the Agricultural Bank of Greece and the granting of raw materials on credit.

[474] 2. The creation and running of cooperatives for buying and selling products.

[446] 3. Agricultural social security.

* * * *

177 This enumeration of the events that form the basis for change, though brief, nevertheless answers the questions posed above.

The assault on the life of the Sarakatsani clearly comes from the outside. It emanates from the surrounding milieu and not from their own milieu, and it can be narrowed to various factors.

The space occupied by the Sarakatsani is conspicuously narrowed. [233] The ecological basis of their society is modified. Physically speaking, [361] isolation in distant regions and nomadic herding become impossible. Moreover, socially speaking, isolation is no longer justified since [641] surrounding society is no longer hostile. The civic rights of Sarakatsani are recognized, protected and respected.

Kinship, cooperation and the community are losing their meaning. [657] Once the state undertakes to finance herding, to ensure education of guarantee security, to exercise foresight to organize cooperation, etc., the omnifunctionalism of the family and the Tséligato no longer has a reason for existing.

Communal patriarchism is likewise shattered. When land is distri- [599] [425] buted to conjugal families, they are established as autonomous economic units. They are thus emancipated. The economic family community gives way to individualism and small-scale individual enterprises.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Sara Katsani
EH14
Vlachs EH15



differ linguistically. Part of the lure of this Epirus trip was learning more about these people and their way of life.

I had already seen their rounded branch and reed huts, surrounded by wattled sheepfolds, put up either in some isolated, sheltered spot or at the edge of some village I was visiting. Although in Greece they do not number more than ten to twelve thousand families, they stand out picturesquely wherever they are. The men are dressed in tight-fitting black felt trousers and a black waistcoat and usually carry a black hip-length cape slung over their shoulder. They wear a round brimless lambskin cap (*kalpaki*). Many of the nomad women, in contrast to most of the Greek peasant women who now wear variations of Western dress, still keep to their heavy pleated homespun skirts, thick wool stockings, and wide leather belt.

Even such generalizations on dwelling and clothing are dangerous, for there are different nomadic groups. From many conversations with the nomads themselves as well as with others familiar with them, I was able to draw up tentative distinctions. On the basis of language, one can easily divide them into three groups. There are Koutso-Vlachs (the Lame Vlachs) who speak a Latin tongue in the home, although most of them, particularly the men, know Greek; the Arvanito-Vlachs (also called Karagouni because of the black cape they wear) who speak Albanian among themselves, although they still understand the Latin language of the Koutso-Vlachs from whom they derive; and the Sarakatsani, said not to be Vlach at all, who speak Greek as their only language. Many informants told me that the Sarakatsani were among the "purest Greeks" because they had practiced endogamy.

Another way of dividing the nomads is on the basis of type of settlement. The Karagouni and the Sarakatsani are called Skenites (literally, "tent dwellers"), for they do not usually have permanent homes either at their summer or their winter encampment. They build their reed huts anew each year or patch up those that remain usable from the previous year. The Koutso-Vlachs as well as the Greek peasants who practice transhumance (like those of Valtetsi) usually have a permanent village which they call home. In some interviews I found that the Koutso-Vlachs considered their winter home as the permanent settlement and the summer pastures the encampment; but most evidence seemed to indicate the reverse to be true.

The origin of these Koutso-Vlachs is one of the great ethnic puzzles of the Balkans, for their Latin tongue, although greatly corrupted by words from other Balkan languages, follows the four conjugations of ancient Latin. As in most riddles of this sort, nationalistic interests have led to several extravagant claims. Some of the modern Rumanians, chiefly in the old provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, looked to the south across Bulgaria and what is now Yugoslavia to claim these Romance-language shepherds as long lost brothers to be reunited with the "homeland." They advanced

1:Sanders Z-514 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Vlachs EH15
Sarakatsani EH14



health. A third effect is that agriculture is almost impossible and is in consequence despised. Finally, home comforts must be portable. That is why an abundance of rugs, blankets, carpets, and cushions seen in these migrations is a sign of wealth.

But what of the Sarakatsani, the Greek-speaking group? [10] Already on a recent drive between Thebes, Lamia, and Volos, cities in Boeotia and Thessaly, I had looked down from the winding mountain roads into their small winter settlements of conical reed huts and circular reed sheepfolds. As we had passed we found the men and boys with their flocks not far from the road. We stopped to pass the time of day.

"How is the pasture this year?"

"Not very good" was the cautious reply.

"Are you Koutso-Vlachs or Sarakatsani?"

"We are Sarakatsani, but we also are Greeks."

Nearer Volos we found that the Sarakatsani, who originally had their huts just on the outskirts of the village, had settled down, building permanent homes. It was a striking contrast to see the reed hut a few feet away from the square mud-brick and mud-plaster house and to know that in case the family got too large some of the members would retire to the old hut and get along very well.

It was in Kalpaki, however, a settlement beyond Ioannina toward the Albanian border, at the edge of the Iron Curtain, that we enjoyed true Sarakatsani hospitality. Actually a Greek peasant village, its members had been increased by the forty Sarakatsani families settling there since the war, primarily to take advantage of the land left untilled by people moving away from disturbed frontier conditions. These forty families really had another village, Kato-Pethini, one-and-a-half-hours walking distance farther up the mountains, where they had their stone houses — something exceptional for those supposed to be Skenites (tent dwellers). Since they were working the fields around Kalpaki, it was here they now lived all the year around, apparently content with their reed houses, most of which followed a rectangular pattern rather than the more common circular shape. The women handled most of the agricultural tasks, but the men went back to the old Kato-Pethini with the flocks and returned to Kalpaki every ten or fifteen days for a change of clothing and a bath. Konstantin, a twenty-two-year-old youth whom we found grazing his sheep around the edges of the cultivated Kalpaki fields, had come down below with his flock for that purpose.

He invited us into the hut to meet his mother and sisters. We first entered the anteroom of the simple reed structure, from which chickens flew out as we came in. There we saw the woolly puppies that would grow up to be the menacing sheep dogs so necessary for the shepherd when alone with his flock. There also was the inevitable water barrel and near the cooking hearth the *ghastra,* the dome-shaped cover that is like a dutch oven. We

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Sarakatsani EH14



This was the cue for us to go outside and watch one of the girls weave on a loom set in a hole about two feet deep and covered with reeds at a height enabling the girl to crawl in for protection from the sun and weather. There in her little foxhole she shuttled away merrily, eagerly and proudly displaying her technique on the narrow brightly figured belt she was weaving. The knowledge that she must get together a big dowry of woven goods before she marries keeps her constantly working. She seemed to experience a certain sense of creativity, both in the pattern she evolved and in the finished product. At least, she had a skill that in the minds of the Sarakatsani set her off from the Karagouni.

Before we left, we talked to Konstantin again. "What is it like up in Kato-Pethini?" we wondered. He told us that a few families still stayed there the year around. Often in the case of a large family the mother and children might stay below near the fields while the shepherd would take his eldest daughter up above to do his cooking and help with the sheep. Konstantin was a hired shepherd of the president of the village council up above, but he hoped some day to have a flock of his own.

This tendency of the Sarakatsani to turn to agriculture when land becomes available was evident in several places. An added incentive to settling may be the emphasis they have long placed upon education for their children. Earlier I had read accounts of large family groups of Sarakatsani of their own accord employing teachers to accompany them on their summer migrations so that the children would not be disadvantaged. When I was in the Lake Prespa area, where Greece, Albania, and Yugoslavia come together, I learned from one of the junior Greek officers there that the Sarakatsani from St. Germanos, who practice transhumance, hire a teacher with their own funds to tutor their children while the regular school is not in session. For such people any visitor who looks even a little beneath the surface of their lives must feel a sense of amazement and respect. Down to what urban Westerners would term the barest level of existence — tiny dirt-floored reed huts, incessant work, and unceasing vigilance — like our early settlers on the edge of Indian territory, they show wit, intelligence, adaptability, and the desire for education, as well as a half-humorous detachment about the difficulties of their life. Fatigue, and a wish for better things are apparent; but bitterness and complaining are not.

One of the most enlightening and entertaining sessions on shepherd life in general took place in the office of George Sakellopoulos, the agricultural director for Epirus. This was in Ioannina, the picturesque provincial capital city. When the director learned of my interest in the nomads, he called together Nicos Mitrocostas, the president of the local shepherd's union, Leander Xenos, an agricultural-extension worker, and Christos Berates, a chief shepherd whose flocks were then passing through Ioannina on their way north.